



Judy Bryson

President, Pioneer Clubs

Judy Bryson knows the extraordinary value of caring adults in the spiritual transformation of a child. She's where she is today because a handful of adults at a small church in New Jersey welcomed her into Sunday school and vacation Bible school.

But it didn't end there.

Another group of dedicated individuals started a Pioneer Clubs® program (then known as Pioneer Girls®), and Judy, who came from an unchurched home, was guided into a lifelong journey of serving the Lord.

All because adults cared enough to invest their time and energy in the life of a child.

Today, as the president of Pioneer Clubs, a position she has held since 1996, Judy has seen firsthand the challenges and triumphs of guiding a children's ministry. Through it all, Pioneer Clubs has held to its core values for nearly 70 years—to evangelize and disciple children for Christ.

Judy has trained leaders. Led clubs. Written curriculum. Studied how children learn. Met with thousands of adults on the frontlines of children's ministries. She's seen trends come and go, but the essentials haven't changed—children need to be mentored and nurtured by caring Christian adults for faith to grow deep roots. It's not about rote Scripture memorization or fleeting Christian entertainment. It's about imprinting the Word of God on a child's heart so it guides and directs that child for a lifetime.

“As a child, you don't fully comprehend why adults lead a program like Pioneer Clubs, but as you get older, you realize your efforts should be put into something that makes a difference,” says Judy. “Investing in the life of a child is satisfying and worthwhile. Leaders don't lead to please themselves—they do so to please God.”

Judy's Pioneer Clubs connection didn't stop after grade school. She belonged to a Pioneer Girls club throughout her high school years and regularly attended Camp Cherith® (Pioneer Clubs' summer camping ministry) in upstate New York. In 1970, Judy joined the Pioneer Clubs staff as a sales representative in the Midwest and director of Land O' Lincoln Camp Cherith.



“I pulled up roots, packed all my earthly belongings, and drove my little green Mustang from the east coast to Wheaton, Illinois,” recalls Judy. “Little did I know how many different experiences I’d have as a result of that move.”

In 1973, she was promoted to director of marketing; in 1980, she became a vice president and corporate officer. As head of marketing, Judy was responsible for market research and product development. She has been involved in the curriculum revisions since 1980 and has helped introduce several new product lines—preschool programs for two- and three-year-olds (Skippers) and four- and five-year-olds (Scooters), an urban curriculum and a “current issues” curriculum.

Judy has served as chair of the Christian education committee at her suburban Chicago church and currently leads a Pioneer Clubs group of energetic boys and girls. Judy graduated from The King’s College with a degree in Christian education and holds a master’s degree in marketing from Lewis University. Before joining Pioneer Clubs, she taught middle school. She is presently pursuing a doctorate in management.

Her wit and wisdom make Judy a favorite workshop leader and speaker. She’s conducted workshops on a range of topics including reaching the next generation of children, developmental assets today’s kids need, faith development in children, and evaluating Christian education programs. In addition, Judy has spoken on management and marketing of nonprofit organizations. Congenial and refreshingly forthright, Judy’s commitment to helping children come to a personal relationship with Jesus shines through.